Return to HW Did you see Russ? Idiot.

Sirhan - RFK - JFK

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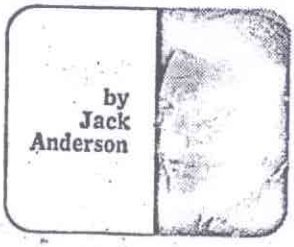
Syrian terrorist in Texas jail waits for U.S. to decide his fate

by Jack Anderson



WASHINGTON — The United States is trying to deport an ex-guerrilla leader to Syria where he faces possible torture and death on charges he embezzled $400,000 from Arab terrorists.

Ironically, if the United States sends him home, he can be forced to sign over at least $120,000 to the terrorists for use against Israeli civilians and other targets.

The strange troubles of the ex-terrorist, Manhoud Barbour, began when he was a Syrian army major. According to his account, he refused to co-operate with a Soviet adviser and, as punishment, was assigned to the dread Saiqa terrorist group.

CLASSIFIED State Department documents pick up the story, saying Barbour, now 43, was "the number three man in Saiqa" which was "established in the wake of the June 1967 War (for) anti-Israeli commando and terrorist activities" from Syrian territory.

"It is estimated that Saiqa is responsible for 8 per cent of all commando operations since 1967. Although ostensibly a Palestine organization, it is, for all intents and purposes, a creation of the Syrian government."

As a Saiqa leader, Barbour was trusted with the funds needed for guns, payment of guerrillas and supplies.

Syria claims he heisted $400,000 while he was transferring the money from one account to another. Barbour claims the total was $140,000 at most, and the money was his inheritance and savings.

Everyone agrees Barbour left Syria in haste and used a forged passport from the little Arab land of Oman to go to Canada, where he stashed $120,000 in banks, then entered the United States illegally and made his way to friends in Texas.

BARBOUR WAS arrested by the United States at the request of a Syrian Interpol official, Mumtaz al Fetoh, even though the United States has no diplomatic relations with Syria. For the last 18 months, Barbour has been in a Texas jail while the United States wrangles over what to do with him.

Commentary

If the United States sends him back to Syria as an illegal entrant, there is every likelihood he will be forced to release the $120,000 to Saiqa for its terrorist activities.

On the other hand, if the United States grants Barbour asylum, it will be just one more slap on the sensitive cheeks of the Arab world which now controls the oil needed so desperately by the United States.

Barbour's lawyer, Jack Wasserman, has demanded from Syria the names of Saiqa's leaders so they can be questioned about the $400,000. Syria has refused so far, fearing perhaps if the names were made public, the Saiqa leaders would be sitting ducks for Israeli assassins.

HW:

No, this thing on the Syrian was not used here. This is the first we'd heard of it. FYI for what it's worth, Barbour suggests quite strongly the dark, well-dressed Middle East character whom the Rev. Jerry Owens described to me as having ridden herd on Sirhan in LA the day before RFK was assassinated. Owens estimated his age then at 35, about right for 43 now. He was impressed with the man's expensive clothes (he would be) and said he seemed to come from the same general region as Sirhan. Interestingly enough, there was a rumor current amojg Jewish circles here that summer that Al Fatah was somehow mixed up in the RFK killing. jdw 5dec73